

January 12, 2022

To: Members of Rockport Planning Board

From: Richard L. Bernhard, Maine Licensed Architect

Subject: 20 Central Street Hotel, Rockport

To the Planning Board, I am Richard Bernhard, an architect and former 25-year resident of Rockport, a previous renter of adjacent 22 Central Street, and former part owner of 23 Central Street, the “Granite Hall” building across the street from the hotel. I am a Camden resident and served on Camden’s Planning Board for 7 years. I am a 2-time recipient of the Maine American Institute of Architects Design Honor Award and have been architect on a number of significant historic structures ranging from the Mt. Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods NH, to the Shepherd Block and Union Hall, adjacent to the new hotel.

As a professional, I admire the form of the Central Street Hotel and respect the care which has been taken in using materials that are harmonious with the neighboring buildings and the character of the business area. Restoration brick, appropriate mortar color, slate roof, and granite stonework are all qualities that should be celebrated.

I am likewise pleased with the way the new building has combined with the Shepherd Block and 22 Central/Union Hall to create a continuous and formidable building presence. I admire the crenellated facade—shorter wall sections and gaps—and gabled dormers that contribute to the “ins-and-outs” of the Central Street elevation. Rockport now has a strong edge to its downtown. It’s like a missing tooth has been fixed.

Balconies are part of this quality too. They give depth, and “play”, and interest to the elevation. They give life to a building and proclaim that people occupy the space. Balconies are located throughout the area; I was instrumental in placing one on the rear of the 22 Central neighbor.

The empty space where the hotel is being built was never a park. It was the result of a building that was demolished in the 1970s. The land was never developed into a park nor used that way. I am pleased to see that this space now has a purpose and will contribute to the energy in Rockport.

Thank you for letting me put forth these observations. I admire your civic responsibilities as members of the Planning Board.

Richard Bernhard